

Essington, PA -- Today, Congressman Joe Sestak, a former Fire Marshal in the Navy and a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, spoke at the Essington Fire Company's 100th Anniversary Banquet.

"Much has changed since the Essington Fire Company first organized 100 years ago," noted Joe at the banquet. "However, one thing has not changed – the brave men and women of the Essington Fire Company continue to be selfless in their service and dedication to this community."

Since 1907, the Essington Fire Company has been protecting the community. It has transitioned from using a horse-drawn carriage to its first official hose cart just a few years later. Since that time, the Company has had to deal with fires of an increasingly dangerous nature, including those started by complex fuels, and the demands of a booming population have intensified the demands on its 100-plus members. Still, they remain as always a highly skilled force whose frequent feats of heroism and selfless dedication remind us of how important first responders are to our communities.

The Essington Fire Company started its EMS service on July 6, 1939 when the Essington Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary donated a 1928 Hanley Ambulance that was purchased from Taylor Hospital. On August 3, 1939 the fire company organized its rescue squad and first aid classes were organized. By June 6, 1940 the first aid classes were completed and a 1935 ambulance was purchased. By the mid-80s, the Fire Company had entered the computer age with the purchase of its first computer for ambulance and fire reporting.

In September 1996 the Essington Fire Company took a big step in providing Tinicum Township and surrounding communities with the quickest and most efficient EMS system it could. This was done by starting a Part-Time paid staff, one of the first organizations in the County to start a paid staff system. As the years went on, Essington Fire Company's EMS Service continued to get busier by picking up more response areas and the amount of calls became somewhat of a burden on the volunteer staff. In this, the officer's and members of the Essington Fire Company found it to be probable to start a Full-Time paid staff to cover primary the ambulance and secondly fire responses.

Presently the Essington Fire Company is the primary EMS service to Tinicum Township, Ridley Park, and Prospect Park Borough's and runs mutual aid response in the City of Chester, Eddystone, Ridley Township, Norwood and other surrounding communities. Primary advanced life support service is provided to Tinicum Township by paramedics from Crozer Hospital. The

ambulance runs an average of 1,750 calls per year and is one of the busiest ambulances in Delaware County.

At the banquet, Joe also spoke of his support and cosponsorship of bipartisan legislation to provide tax relief for volunteer first responders. The legislation, the Volunteer Firefighter's Tax Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 943), would allow state and local governments the flexibility to develop beneficial tax incentives, including property tax abatements, retirement awards, death benefits, health benefits, and state income tax credits, for encouraging recruitment and retention for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel. Joe hopes that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and local municipalities will continue to work to provide their volunteer emergency responders with the appropriate incentives, rewarding them for the first-class service they offer the citizens of Pennsylvania.

"As a Fire Marshal in the Navy, I know of the selfless commitment of first-responders. It is vital we enact legislation that will encourage the recruitment and retention of these invaluable members of our community," stated Joe.

Joe plans to visit all the fire and police stations in the district. He has already visited Ridley Park Fire Co. 1, Radnor Fire Co., Swarthmore Fire Co., Folsom Fire Co., Llanerch Fire Co., Prospect Park Fire Department, Cardington-Stonehurst Fire Company, and Brookline Fire Company. On Saturday, March 3, Joe attended the 101st Annual Awards dinner of the Delaware County Firemen's Association of the State of Pennsylvania.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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